8 STEPS TO HAPPINESS

Awakening the Inner Self in Pursuit of Personal Change

Shaykh Abū ʿAbdu-r-Raḥmān Nāṣir as-Saʿdī (1307-d1376H)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Imām ʿAbdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Nāṣir
al-Saʿdī [d. 1376H]

8 Steps to HAPPINESS

a translation of
'Wasā'il al-Mufīda lil-Hayāt al-Saʿīdah'

دار السنة

"Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, verily for him will We give a life that is good and pure, and We will surely bestow on them their reward [in the Hereafter]..."

[QUR'ĀN (16): 97]

8 Steps to Happiness

by
Imām ʻAbdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Nāṣir
al-Saʻdī [d. 1376H]

دار السنة
Dār as-Sunnah Publishers
BIRMINGHAM

First Published in Great Britain, January 2020 / Jumada Al-Awwal 1441H
by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers

DĀR AS-SUNNAH PUBLISHERS
P.O. Box 9818, Birmingham, B11 4WA, United Kingdom

W: www.darassunnah.com
E: info@darassunnah.com
E: daar-us-sunnah@mail.com

British Library Cataloguing in publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Title: 8 Steps to Happiness
by Imām 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Nāṣir al-Sa'dī
Translated from the original Arabic

ISBN 1-904336-63-9
Paper-back

Published and Typeset by: Dār as-Sunnah Publishers
First Edition, 1441 AH/2020 CE

Content

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Imām ʿAbdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Nāṣir al-Saʿdī

His Name and Lineage

He is Abū ʿAbdullāh ʿAbdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Nāṣir Ibn ʿAbdullāh Ibn Nāṣir āli Saʿdī from the Tamīmī tribe. He was born in the city of ʿUnayzah, Qasīm on the 12th Muharram, 1307H. His mother passed away when he was but four years old and his father when he was seven. Hence he grew up as an orphan but despite this he had a goodly upbringing.

He was extremely intelligent and had memorised the Qur'ān by the age of eleven after which he devoted himself to studying under the scholars of his land. He strove in his studies until he excelled in all of the various Islāmic sciences and by the age of twenty-three he was already teaching. He devoted himself entirely to learning and teaching until he became the leading religious authority in

the land, with students of knowledge flocking to him from all regions.

His Conduct and Demeanor

He possessed many exceptional virtues. He was humble to the young and the old, the rich and the poor. He used to spend his time meeting the people who desired his company. His gatherings were circles of knowledge for the reason that his endeavour was to make them consist of congregational study and research, and bring huge benefits through these useful and time-consuming studies to the people who attended the sessions. He would often settle disputes that ended with both of the parties being satisfied with his fair mediation.

However, he would never censure or look down upon those who followed a particular school of thought. He was also an expert in *tafsīr*, having read many works of *tafsīr* and studied it under his teachers and he actually authored a *tafsīr* himself. All who heard him speak when explaining the Book of Allāh would wish that he never stop due to his inspiring manner of speech and the great benefits that he derived from its verses.

He was an expert in *fiqh* and *usūl al-fiqh*, initially he was Hanbalī in *madhhab*, as were all of his teachers, his first work on *fiqh* was written in poem form upon the Hanbalī School which he also commented. He studied the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim extensively and benefited enormously from them. As he progressed in his studies he no longer restricted himself to the Hanbalī School but rather followed the course he believed to be proven by the strongest evidences.

Some of his Teachers

He studied under a host of the leading scholars of his time, from amongst was:

- Ibrāhīm Ibn Hamd Ibn Jāṣir, the author would praise him for his extensive memorisation of ḥadīth, his piety and his love of the poor.
- Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdu'l-Karīm al-Shibl,
- Ṣāliḥ Ibn 'Uthmān - the Judge of 'Unayzah,
- Sa'b al-Quwayjirī,
- Muhammad al-Amīn al-Shanqītī
- 'Abdullāh ibn 'Ayish,
- Sā'id al-Tuwaijirī,
- 'Alī ibn al-Sinānī,
- 'Alī Nāṣir,
- Abū Wādī - with whom he studied ḥadīth, the six major books and others, and who gave him a teaching endorsement for them.
- Muḥammad, Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz al-Muḥammad al-Mānī,
- And many others

Some of his Students

- Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn
- 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz Ibn 'Aqil
- 'Alī Ibn Zamal Aslaym
- Aludīn Kujab Qadās
- Ruzbahan Nurbakhsh
- And many others

His Works

He authored a number of works amongst which were:

1. *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Mannān*
2. *Irshādu li al-Basā'īr wa al-Bāb li-Mā'rifati al-Fiqh bī Aqrabī al-Turuq wa Aisar il-Asbāb*
3. *Al-Durrah al-Mukhtasarah fi-Mahāsin al-Dīn al-Islāmī*
4. *Al-Khūtub al-'Asriyyah al-Qayyimah*
5. *Al-Qawā'id al-Hisān li-Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*
6. *Wujūd al-Ta'āwun bayn al-Muslimīn wa al-ādhu al-Jihād al-Dīn*
7. *Al-Qawl al-Sadīd fi-Maqāsid al-Tawhīd*
8. *Taysīr al-Latīf al-Mannān fi-Khulāsat Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*
9. *Taysīr al-Karīm ar-Rahmān*, which he completed in the year 1344H,
10. *Taysīr al-Latīf al-Mannān* in *tafsīr*;
11. *Hāshiyah 'alā al-Fiqh and Irshād Ulī-l-Albāb* in *fiqh*;
12. *al-Haqq al-Wādih al-Mubīn, Tawdīh al-Kāfiyah al-Shāfiyah*, in belief.
13. *Manhaj al-Salikīn*
14. *al-Qawaa'id wal-Usul al-Jāmi'ah wal-Furuq wat-Taqāsim al-Badi'ah an-Nāfi'ah*
15. *Diwān Khutab*
16. *Tanzih ad-Din*
17. *Radd 'alā al-Qasimī*
18. *Al-Brānsi Wāghir wa-Jinna*
19. *Al-Haqq al-Waadhih al-Mubayyin*
20. *Bahjatu Qulūb al-Abraar*
21. *Ar-Riyādh an-Nādhirah*
22. *Al-Durrat al-Fakhira*

His Death

After a blessed life of almost 69 years spent entirely in the service of knowledge, he left to be closer to his Lord in the year 1376H, in the city of 'Unayzah in the year 1376H, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allāh, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Praise be to Allāh and for Him are all praises. There is no deity worthy of worship but Him alone without any partners. Peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger Muhammad and upon his Family, Companions and all those who follow his guidance from the believers until the Last Day.

There is no doubt or illusion that happiness is sought by every person from every walk of life. Yet, how it is sought remains the key for many of us to understand in pursuit of it. Some find joy in accumulating wealth, hoping this will fill the void of being content. For others, it is indulging in faulty entertainment, vices and promiscuity and anything that might distract attention away from reality, even if it is considered unlawful or immoral. Others drown in bottles of alcohol or in the sounds of the decadent music industry; each witnessing and seeking something that will lure them out of states of grief and anxiety etc.

How then is delight and contentment achieved? Indeed, Allāh, the Most High is the Creator of this world and has not left mankind without the means to achieve the guidance and pathway to what the innate desire of man wants and needs.

For example, Allāh, the Most High, said of the Qur'ān:

هَٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

> "This [Qur'ān] is a clear statement to [all] the people and a guidance and instruction for those conscious of Allāh."[1]

To proceed: states of contentment, tranquillity and having a peace of mind and happiness—and doing away with anxiety and depression—are goals we actively seek. Attaining them will translate to our happiness and lead to a goodly life. Reaching them however, is contingent on three main causes:—namely, religious, natural and practical—none of which are possible to secure except by one who has believed and submitted themselves to Will of the Creator.

Aside from believers, others may assume reasons in attaining the causes of happiness from one aspect, yet, another cause will escape them from the other side that is stronger, more qualified and useful.

I will mention in this treatise of mine the ways and means to achieve this lofty goal that is universally quested.

Among the causes for happiness are those that have been weighed wisely and well-trodden. Among the causes for misery

[1] *Āl-'Imrān* (3): 138

are those that have also been notable and recognised; and then there are those practices mixed with both, causes of happiness and misery as per whatever Allāh has accorded.

And indeed, Allāh is the One who grants opportunities and means, assists with goodness and prevents from evil.

STEP 1

True Belief (*īmān*) and Performing Good Deeds (*al-ʿaml al-ṣāliḥ*)

The primary and greatest means for happiness and achieving a good life is having certainty in belief (*īmān*) and good deeds (*al-ʿaml al-sāliḥ*). Allāh the Most High, said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ
أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ
أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

> "Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, verily to him will We give a life that is good and pure, and We will surely bestow on them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."[2]

Allāh, the Most High, informs and promises a good life

[2] *Al-Naḥl* (16) : 97

(*ḥayā' al-ṭayyiba*) in this world and a good return in the Hereafter for whoever joins (*jamʿ*) true belief with good and righteous deeds.

The reason is very clear, for whoever believes in Allāh sincerely, such true belief (*īmān al-ṣaḥīḥ*) will lead to righteous deeds; and such belief will mend the hearts (*muṣliḥ lil-qulūb*) and corrects one's behaviours (*akhlāq*), and makes good both this world and the Hereafter; such a people have the basic elements (*asās*) that guide them in dealing with situations of happiness and joy, and situations of anxiety (*qaliq*), sorrow (*hamm*) and grief (*ḥuzn*).

They begin to perceive bliss and joy, coupled with contentment (*riḍā*) and thankfulness (*shukr*)—utilising it towards things positive. Reacting in this way brings about delight, recognition of blessings and hope of reward (*rajā' thawāb*). This simultaneously increases their accumulation of greater goodness and blessings beyond what they have gained.

On the other hand, in harmful and unpleasant situations of grief and sorrow, they deal with them by resisting what can be resisted, and lighten what can be lightened; and they persevere and show contentment over what they have no power over. Thus, they achieve the benefits of earnestly striving and gathering experience and inner strength. They earn the reward of patience, the greatness of which diminishes in comparison, the distasteful things that befell them. As a result they end up having in place of the unpleasantness, joy and good hope; and a sincere desire for the favours of Allāh and His reward. The Prophet (ﷺ) beautifully expressed this situation in an authentic ḥadith, where he said: "The affair of the believer is really wonderful! All his affairs are good: when he is touched by ease and affluence, he is thankful, and that

is good for him; and when he is touched by suffering he is patient, and that is good for him. And this only for the believer."[3]

A believer's reward is multiplied in every situation. It is such that when encountering any kind of favour, blessing or calamity, we usually see two types of people respond according to the level of faith and conviction they hold, which is also reflected in the goodness of deeds each one conducts.

The first type is a person who has both, belief and righteous deeds. This person will face the ups and downs of life with thankfulness (*shukr*), patience (*ṣabr*) and acceptance. This will lead him to a more wholesome life in this world. He recognises such attitude alleviates misery and counters episodes of sadness, anxieties and grief in life.

The second type is a person who is haughty, disbelieves and transgresses beyond limit when endowed with favour and grace. This in turn, impacts his manners and etiquette as he adopts those favours with greed and miserliness, almost animal-like. Despite this, his heart remains anxious and worried about everything. He becomes afraid of losing what he loves and anguished over suffering harm. His soul is insatiable, always seeking more of the things he sometimes manages to get and sometimes doesn't. Even when acquiring it he remains uneasy.

When faced with trials, this person responds with anxiety that constricts the chest (*ḍīq al-ṣudūr*), with fear (*kawf*) and resentment. Do not ask about the misery their life goes through, the ailment of the mind and body bring out the worst in them. This whole

[3] Muslim, 4/2295, Aḥmad, 4/333 and Dārimī, 2/318 on the authority of Suhayb (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*).

outlook is a result of a deep void and emptiness because such people do not expect to be rewarded [by their Creator] and do not have reasons to assume patience that would lighten their burden.

All this is apparent for the one who is able to see. An example of a virtue that is brought about through patience is the encouragement to be content (*qanāʿa*) with the sustenance Allāh graces us with. If you observe this characteristic amidst humanity, you will see a striking difference between believers who practice their faith and those who struggle to reconcile faith.

The believer for example, if tested with sickness (*maraḍ*) and poverty (*faqr*) or other than that, will remain even-tempered and his heart does not demand that his condition be made known. He will look to disadvantaged persons beneath him and not those above him so as to appreciate his blessings. It may be that his happiness exceeds the happiness of those who have obtained all the pleasures of the world. This is due to faith, acceptance and satisfaction and the delights they contain for its beholder to reflect upon.

On the contrary, the person who does not exercise the consequences of his faith will epitomise sadness whenever tested, even with a few shortcomings or loss in his worldly ambitions. One whose faith is firmly rooted has a heart that is strong, a soul that is tranquil and nurtured and primarily in control. His mindset, words and deeds are a tuned to face life's ups and downs; these are the things that calm a person. Weak faith makes it susceptible for feelings to be jolted and nerves to be tensed and for the mind to dissipate; resulting in a heart filled with shock and awed from outside and from within, the condition of which cannot be expressed in words. Such a person not accustomed to naturally adapted attitudes or controlled emotions—which usually take a

lot of practice—will have his energy drained and spirit stressed.

It is true whether righteous (*birr*) or disobedient (*fājir*), believer (*mu'min*) or disbeliever (*kāfir*), both share the common human quality of acquired courage (*shuʿjā'a*), as well as the innate ability to deal with dreadful situations and lessen their oppressive effects on the self. But the believer, because of his strong belief (*quwa al-īmān*), patience (*ṣabr*) and reliance (*iʿtimād*) and trust (*tawakul*) in Allāh, and his desire to be rewarded by Allāh, excels in having qualities that make him more courageous, and soothe more effectively the pangs of terror and the pains of calamity on him.

Allāh, the Most High, said:

إِن تَكُونُواْ تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا
تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ

> "If you are suffering hardships, they too are suffering similar hardships: but you hope from Allāh that for which they hope not."[4]

In addition to that, the believers receive from Allāh His special help, succour and assistance that will drive away the dread and terror that befell them.

Allāh, the Most High, said:

وَٱصْبِرُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

> "And be patient. Surely Allāh is with those who are patient."[5]

[4] *Al-Nisā* (4): 104

[5] *Al-Anfāl* (8): 46

Among the means of eliminating worry, grief and anxiety is being gracious towards creation, by words and all types of good acts. All of these are good and excellent in the sight of Allāh, and by them Allāh removes worries and anxieties from both the good and the evil; each in accordance with his level of being good to creation. Except that the portion of the believer is more complete and perfect, and he also excels by the fact that his goodness is borne out of sincerity to Allāh and seeking his reward.

As a result Allāh makes the act of doing good and granting it easy for him because of his hope in the goodness with Allāh; and He removes from him pleasant things because of his sincerity to Allah and his seeking the reward from Him alone.

Allāh, the Most High, said:

﴿ لَّا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ
أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ
ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

> "There is no good in most of their secret conferences except (in) him who exhorts to a deed of charity [in Allāh's cause],or goodness, or conciliation between people. Whoever does that seeking the pleasure of Allāh, We shall bestow on him an immense reward."[6]

In this verse, Allāh, the Most High, informs us that these are all acts of goodness (*khayr*) for whosoever does them; and acts of goodness brings them benefit and removes evil (*sharr*).

---

[6] *Al-Nisā* (4): 114

Thus, for the true believer seeking reward and pleasure of Allāh, for him Allāh gives an immense reward.

Part of that immense reward is the removal of grief, sorrow and anguish.

STEP 2

Occupying Oneself with Activity or Useful Knowledge

Among the means of warding off anxieties and the preoccupation of the heart with sorrow is to occupy oneself with one activity or another, or with some useful knowledge (*'ilm*). This is because doing that will distract the heart away from being immersed in its anxieties. It may even help him forget the things that caused him grief and worry, and he may even experience some happiness and become cheerful.

This is also something that is common between both the believer and the non-believer. But the believer is different; because when he occupies himself with the knowledge that he is seeking or giving, or with the good action he is doing—whether it be an act of worship or a worldly act where his intention is to seek strength in worshipping Allāh—when he does that, he does it out of his belief in Allāh, sincerity and seeking the pleasure of Allāh. This in itself has the additional effect of warding off grief, worries and

anxieties [by a Divine intervention].

We have seen many people afflicted with sorrows and permanent anxieties, to the extent of making them very ill; their only cure was to make them forget the cause of their sorrow and misery, and be preoccupied with their normal activities. The activity to be preoccupied with should be something pleasing to the self, and one that it yearns for. This makes it more effective in achieving the desired goal, and Allāh knows best.

Section one:
Occupying Oneself With The Present

Among the things that ward off worry and anxiety is to concern oneself with the affairs of the present, and not to be anxious about the future, nor grieve over the past. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) sought refuge in Allāh from anxiety and grief.[7]

Grief (*ḥuzn*) is usually over past events that you can neither bring back nor rectify. Anxiety (*hamm*) is usually fear and concern over what will come in the future. Therefore a person should concentrate his energy and attention in the betterment of his existing events, and his present moments. Focusing on the affairs of the moment is the necessary cause of them being accomplished, and it is what gets rid of grief and anxiety from the heart. When the Prophet (ﷺ), asks something from Allāh, or guides his community to ask specific thing from Allāh, he is exhorting them with seeking help from Allāh, and having hope in His favour, at the same time they have to work hard and earnestly for the accomplishment of what they asked to be removed from them. Therefore making

[7] Bukhārī, 11/178, Aḥmad, 3/220, Abū Dāwūd, 2/90, Tirmidhī, 5/520 and Nasā'ī, 8/257 on the authority of Anas Ibn Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

du'ā' should go side by side with action. So the slave strives for what will benefit him in his religion and in his worldly life, and he asks his Lord to make him accomplish his need, and he seeks His help in that.

As the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Strive for what will benefit you, and seek the help of Allāh, and do not be incapacitated. And if something afflicts you, do not say: 'If I had done such and such, such and such would have happened.' But say: 'This is the decree of Allāh, He does what He wills. This is because 'if' opens the act of *Shayṭān*.'"[8]

In this narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) exhorts us to join between two things: the first is to strive for useful things in all situations, and seek the help (*isti'ānah*) of Allāh, and not surrender ('adm inqiyād) ourselves to powerlessness, because that is from negligence that harms.

The second is to surrender events of the past to Allāh, and witness in them the decree of Allāh and His predestination (*qaḍā' Allāh wa qadr*).

The Prophet (ﷺ) defined two categorical matters: the first category are affairs the servant (*'abd*)has the ability to accomplish totally or partially, or those that he can avoid completely or at least lighten their impact. For this category, the servant should exert his utmost and seek the help of the One he worships (*ma'būd*). The second category is those affairs over which the servant has no power. For this, the slave should calm himself, and accept what came to him and surrender (to Allāh).

---

[8] Muslim, 4/ 2052, Aḥmad, 2/366, Ibn Mājah, 1/31 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

There is no doubt that complying with this principle is a definite means of achieving happiness and keeping worry and grief away from oneself.

STEP 3

Remembrance (*dhikr*) and Thankfulness (*shukr*)

Among the greatest means (*akbar al-asbāb*) to achieve the expansion of the heart (*insharāḥ al-sadr*) and its tranquillity (*ṭamā'niya*) is abundant remembrance (*ikthār min dhikr*) of Allāh. Remembrance of Allāh has a profound effect (*tā'thīr 'ajīb*) of bringing relief and tranquillity to the heart, while removing worry (*hamm*) and grief (*ghamm*) from it. Allāh, the Most High, said:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ ٱلْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

"Without doubt, in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find satisfaction."[9]

This is because of the great effect (*athar 'aẓīm*) that the remembrance of Allāh has over the hearts and the fact that the servant (*'abd*), when remembering Allāh has hope of receiving a good reward (*thawāb*) and recompense (*ajar*) from Him.

---

[9] *Al-Ra'd* (13): 28

Section One:
Thankfulness (*shukr*)

Among the things is to mention the favours and blessings (*n'ima*) of Allāh on oneself, both the outwardly manifest (*ẓāhira*) and hidden (*bāṭina*). There is no doubt that recognition of Allāh's favours and blessings, and speaking about them, is a means by which Allāh removes grief (*hamm*) and worry (*ghamm*) [from the heart], and [this noble act] encourages the servant (*'abd*) to be ever thankful, and such thankfulness reaches the highest level (*marātib a'lā*)—even though the servant may be in state of poverty (*faqr*), sickness (*maraḍ*) or other forms of tribulations (*balāya*) that engulf him. When he compares the countless and endless favours of Allāh upon him with the trials that befell him, he sees how extremely small they are in comparison with the blessings of Allāh granted him with.

In fact, trials and tribulations are such that when the servant is afflicted with them, and he observes patience (*ṣabr*), contentment (*riḍā*) and submission (*taslīm*) in the face of the afflictions and harm he is being tested with, their burden becomes lightened and their pain becomes mild.

In addition to that, the servant hopes for the reward that these afflictions will bring if he worships Allāh, while he embodies patience (*ṣabr*) and contentment (*riḍā*); thus, turning the bitterness of observing patience into sweetness (*halāwa*). So the sweetness of reward (*ḥalāwa ajar*) causes him to forget the bitterness of the patience (*marāra ṣabr*).

Section Two:
Implementing the Teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Among the most useful methods of acquiring happiness (*ḥalāwa*), is earned by implementing the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ). In a confirmed narration where he (ﷺ) said: "Look to those that are below you [with regards to worldly possessions], and do not look at those that are above you [with regards to worldly possessions]; that is more befitting for you not hold the favours and blessings of Allāh on you with contempt."[10]

Indeed, if a servant were to put this noble teaching in front of his eyes, he would realise how far he has been exalted and favoured over many people: in well-being (*'afiya*) and having been exempted from tribulations, in richness (*rizq*) and what comes with it; so this is true no matter what his situation. If the servant does this, his anxiety will vanish, as well as his grief and worry, and his delight (*surūr*) and joy (*farḥ*) with the favours and blessings of Allāh by which he has been placed above many who are lower than him, will increase.

The deeper the servant reflects on the manifest and hidden favours and blessing of Allāh, [with regards] to worldly and religious affairs, the more he sees that his Lord has granted him so much goodness and has distanced him from countless worries and sadness. There is no doubt that all this removes sadness and sorrow and replaces them with delight and happiness.

[10] Muslim, 4/2275, Aḥmad, 2/254, Tirmidhī, 4/666 and Ibn Mājah 2/1387 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

STEP 4

Removing Whatever Produces Sadness and Seeking Means of Happiness

Among the means that bring about happiness and remove sorrow and anxiety is attempting to eliminate the things that bring about misery, and seek after those that bring about happiness (*surūr*). This can be achieved by forgetting and discarding any misfortunes that occurred in the past; obviously he has no power to return to them. And he recognises that occupying the mind in these matters is in vain; in fact it is stupidity (*aḥmaq*), bordering on lunacy (*junūn*).

This means he has to detach his heart (qalb) away from thinking (tafakkir) about the past and keep striving to preserve his heart, not fearing things he imagines for the future. He must accept the realisation that everything taking place in the future, whether good or evil, ideal or flawed are from the unknown matters that alone rest in the Hands of the Almighty, the Wise.

A person should only be concerned with cultivating goodness and refusing to adopt pathways leading to harm in the future. He

must know that turning his mind away from negative thoughts and surrendering to Allāh's all-encompassing knowledge and wisdom, his heart will find serenity and temperate his condition that in turn, will improve his mental well-being too.

Section one:
Using Prophetic Supplications

Among the most beneficial acts in addressing hope of one's future is using supplications taught the Prophet (ﷺ):

«اللَّهُمَّ أَصْلِحْ لِي دِينِي الَّذِي هُوَ عِصْمَةُ أَمْرِي، وَأَصْلِحْ لِي دُنْيَايَ الَّتِي فِيهَا مَعَاشِي، وَأَصْلِحْ لِي آخِرَتِي الَّتِي فِيهَا مَعَادِي، وَاجْعَلِ الْحَيَاةَ زِيَادَةً لِي فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ، وَالْمَوْتَ رَاحَةً لِي مِنْ كُلِّ شَرٍّ»

> "Allāhumma asliḥ lī dīnī alladhī huwa ʿismat amrī wa asliḥ lī dunyāya allatī fihī maʿāshī wa asliḥ lī ākhiratī allatī fihā maʿādī w'ajʿal al-hayāta ziyādatan lī fī kulli khayri w'ajʿal al-mawta rāhatan lī min kulli sharr."

> "O Allāh, make me adhere properly to my religion, on which all my affairs depend; make this world good for me in which is my livelihood; make my Hereafter good for me, in which is my ultimate destiny; make my life increase in every good thing and make my death a respite from every evil."[11]

And he (ﷺ) also taught us the following supplication:

[11] When one is worried about what may happen in the future, the following *duʿā* is very beneficial and it is reported on the authority Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) Muslim, #2720

اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ
عَيْنٍ أَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ

"Allāhumma raḥmataka arjū fa lā takilni ilā nafsī tarfat 'ayn w'asliḥ lī sha'nī kullahu lā ilāha illā anta"

"O Allāh, for Your mercy I hope, so do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for the blink of an eye; rectify all my affairs. There is no god except You."[12]

If the servant (*'abd*) says this *du'ā*, which entails seeking the betterment (*ṣilāḥ*) of his future both in terms of his religion and his worldly affairs, if he says that with a mindful heart (*qalb ḥādir*), and a true and sincere intention (*niyyah ṣādiqa*), coupled with an earnest struggle (*ijtihād*) to achieve it, then Allāh will grant what he asks for, hopes (*rajā'*) in and endeavours to accomplish. Thus, his worry (*hamm*) will change to happiness (*farḥ*) and delight (*surūr*).

[12] Another of the beneficial *du'ā's* which the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) taught us is the one he told us about when he (ﷺ)said: "The *du'ā'* of the person who is in distress is..." Abū Dāwūd in his sunan #5090 and al-Albānī authenticated it in '*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi*' #3388 and in '*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd*' #4246.

STEP 5

Imagining Worst Situations

Among the most beneficial means that eliminate anxiety (*qaliq*) and sorrow (*hamūm*) of a person overcome by trials and calamities, is for him to struggle to lighten its difficulties by imagining the worst possible thing that could happen.

This means he is able to weigh and predict worst possible scenarios and outcomes and then being prepared to face them. He builds strategies able to better position himself to minimise risks as much as possible. With preparedness and stratagem, he will unlock the mental block and deal with sadness and loss by the very attempt to reach out for goodness and reject pathways of harm.

When one is stricken with fear (*kawf*), or illnesses (*asqām*), or poverty (*faqr*) and deprivation (*'adm*) of what he likes and covets, let him receive these afflictions with tranquillity (*ṭamā'nīyah*) and dedication (*tauṭīn*) in resisting the worst that these afflictions could bring. Thus, one combines the qualities of determination and tireless efforts that keep him engaged rather than feeling anxiety on

account of the afflictions that struck him.

Even if the challenges are great, his strong determination will ease the burden of his mind and ease his pain, preoccupied with navigating outcomes according to his ability. Within him merges an impressing etiquette and a steady soul diverting attention away from negativity, seeking also to renew strength (*tajdīd quwa*) to face challenges while relying (*iʿtimād*) on Allāh—convinced of His assistance and hoping for reward. There is no doubt that these approaches have a huge role in achieving happiness (*surūr*) and peace of mind (*insharāḥ al-sudūr*). It can be witnessed and tested and many people have experienced it, and whoever tastes it knows it.

STEP 6

Firmness of the Heart and Reliance On Allāh

Among the greatest cures (*'alājāt*) to nervous and mental disorders, and even other illnesses of the body, is related to the firmness of the heart (*quwa al-qalb*) and its strength. They are not drowned or affected by illusions and imaginations that come from negative, evils thoughts (*afqār al-say'ia*). For when man gets caught lusting over desires and fantasies, he will become a target of affliction that includes anxiety, depression, physical pain and stress. His heart will be affected by disorders like anger (*ghadab*), panic (*tashwish*), disturbance and prejudice upon appearance of bad things and the loss of good things.

Section one:
Reliance upon Allāh

When the heart relies and depends on Allāh and isn't surrenderd to illusions and does not let evil imaginations get the better of him,

and puts his trust in Allāh, and remains convinced of Allāh's grace and good expectation, sorrows and anxieties and various malaises disappear; with the heart gaining strength, relief and happiness that are beyond expression.

How many hospitals are filled with sick people suffering from mental illusions (*awhām*) and evil imaginations (*khayālāt al-fāsida*)!

How many a strong people have these things shatter their hearts, let alone of weaker ones! The only one exempted is the one whom Allāh has given well-being, and guided him to struggle with his self (*jihād al-nafs*) in acquiring useful and beneficial means of strengthening the heart (*nāfiʿa al-maqwiyya lil-qalb*) and warding off worries (*ḍāfiʿa liqaliq*) from it.

As Allāh, the Most High, said:

وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُۥٓ

> "And whoever puts his trusts on Allāh, sufficient is Allāh for him."[13]

Meaning that Allāh is sufficient for him in all that worries him concerning his religious and worldly necessities.

A person (*mutawkil*) who puts his trust in Allāh is strong-hearted (*quwi al-qalb*) and unfazed by prejudice, nor disturbed by fluidity of developing events because he understands it stems from weakness of the soul (*ḍaʿf al-nafs*) and unnatural fear (*kawf*). He also knows that Allāh has guaranteed the one who puts his trust in Him to suffice him completely, so he is confident in Allāh, and he feels

[13] *Al-Ṭalāq* (65): 3

assured of the promise of Allāh, as a result of having his losses reversed, sorrow and restlessness removed, and his difficulties replaced by ease, and his sadness by happiness, and his fear by peace and security. We ask Allāh to give us well-being (*'āfiya*) and exemption from adversities, and to grant us strength of heart and its firmness in having true confidence in Allāh, by which He guarantees those who have its provision of all good and removal of all harm and evil.

Let us ask Allāh for health and that He grants us the gift of strength and steadfastness with perfect reliance (*tawakkal*), which Allāh has guaranteed the person who put his trust in Him, with all types of goodness and keeps him away from every evil.

STEP 7

Repelling Evil with Good

There are two important lessons to learn from the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Let not a believing man (husband) hate a believing woman (wife), for if he dislikes one of her characteristics he will be pleased with another."[14]

Firstly: It provides guidance in regards to dealing with one's wife, close relatives, friends, colleagues and anyone who is connected or has something to do with you. You should realise that everyone has a disagreeable trait, a disadvantage or something you do not like. In this case, compare the individual's shortcoming with your duty of care in maintaining relationships and showing affection. This can be done by remembering all of their goodness and well-intentions, and by overlooking their faults and recalling kindness. Friendships and relationships will last the test of time and manifest comfort.

Secondly: Continued sincerity in being ever ready to fulfil the obligatory rights and voluntary rights as shown by the Prophetic

[14] Muslim, 2/ 1091 and Aḥmad, 2/329 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*).

guidance in creating harmony between two (disputing) parties. This can only result in doing away with any grief and sadness.

Whoever does not understand and put into practice what the Prophet (ﷺ) taught and acts contrary by focusing on the negative side of people and forgetting the good, will inevitably be panic-stricken. This will in turn, lead to relationships becoming sour and murky —making dormant the obligations to keep each other connected.

Section one:
High Aspirations (*himm*) and Inner Energy

Many people with high aspirations (*himm*) and inner energy are able to prepare themselves to deal with heavy calamities and adversities with patience (*ṣabr*) and tranquillity (*ṭatmā'niyya)*, but when they are faced with small and trivial issues, they become worried and anxious, and their hearts lose clarity of thought and become clouded. The reason for this is their ability to control themselves in major events and unable to do so in minor things because they are easily annoyed by finer details they observe and thus, upset their balance of comfort.

A person who is able to handle himself[15] during both, major and minor situations has a deeper connection with his Creator and seeks succour in Him. He asks Allāh not to forsake him or surrender his affairs to himself even for a moment. This is the key to him being at ease in both ends of a situation. He will become more calmer and his heart will be at peace.

[15] Lit: *'Hazim'*, a person whose actions are firmly directed, disciplined in every way, not wishy-washy, half-hearted and unreliable.

STEP 8

Enjoying Moments of Happiness

The intelligent person knows that his real life is the life he lives in happiness (*sa'ādah*) and tranquillity (*ṭamā'niyyah*), and that it is very short indeed. Therefore, It is not wise to shorten it further with sorrow and let it drift away with turmoil as this goes against a truly lived life. He will feel a massive loss when most of his life is lost in vain due to sadness and pessimism. In this case, all types of people are similar, but the believer holds more value in applying this principle because of aforementioned reasons. When he is over-ridden with anguish or afraid of a looming disaster, he is prompt in comparing between the favours he has gained with whatever has befallen him. At that moment he realises the greater amount of favours he has, and how often he is kept away from many other troubles and calamities.

He likewise, weighs between any fear of looming danger with much hope and possibilities to overcome and survive them. Thus, he does not tallow smaller possibilities defeat stronger possibilities. He estimates the worst of risks and prepares himself for any

eventuality, while simultaneously trying to reduce or replace the risk altogether.

Included among the helpful means is recognising interference from other people against oneself—especially with bad speech—will not hurt you but hurt them. It can only hurt you if you become absorbed thinking about it and letting it control your feelings. If you are oblivious to it, you will not be harmed by it.

When something unpleasant happens to him, or he is afraid that it will happen to him, he should remember the other blessings of Allāh on him in his religion and worldly life, and compare them with the unpleasant thing. If he does that, he will realise how abundant are the blessings of Allāh on him, and how insignificant are the troubles that befell him.

Section one:
Expecting Allāh's Response

Among the most useful ways to drive away grief is to train yourself not to desire thanks and gratitude from anyone except Allāh alone. So if you are gracious to someone who has a right over you or not, then know this is by way of your dutiful interaction with Allāh. Hence, do not care about any praise, reward or thanks from people who receive your kindness. As Allāh said about the attitude of the chosen people among His creation:

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنكُمْ جَزَآءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

> "[They say]: We feed you for the sake of Allāh alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks"[16]

[16] *Al-Insān* (71): 9

This is highly emphasised regarding family, children and people whom have strong bonds of relationship with you. As you become mindful to distance away any harm from them, that's when you feel good about yourself and invite tranquillity and joy.

Section Two:
Taking Lessons from Calamities

Among the means leading to happiness is learning those things that are ennobling, and then setting out to put them into motion—without needing to force oneself to do so in order to prevent the soul from distress. It is part of wisdom that you extract something good even from what is seemingly bad; this will inevitably bring pleasure and distance turbidity. Take all that is useful and try to utilize it for your benefit; and avoid useless things that may cause harm and anxiety. Stay composed and focused on tasks deemed more important.

Section Three:
Prioritise Importance Tasks

Among the things that bring about satisfaction is executing a job well, with immediacy and with perfection, and then following it up with the next task to similar high standard. This will naturally be gratifying, for if work is left incomplete it not only piles up but also leads to discomfort and ache as you play catch up. If you complete every job in a timely manner you are then relieved to face tomorrow's business with maximum effect and effort.

It is crucial that you sort out and manage the most important tasks first, while making a distinction between what you enjoy and what you prefer. It is prudent to vary between tasks to ensure they

do not become tedious, chaotic or bring boredom.

Consider options with a clear mind and consult people whom are worthy to be consulted. People who are conscientious and deliberate will not regret their decisions. Learn what you need to perform in detail, if you are sure about the benefits and made a determined choice, then rely upon Allāh because Allāh loves those who place their full confidence in Him.

This concludes our short treatise and we beseech Allāh to rectify the affairs of those who are sincere in seeking His aid.

Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds,
and may peace and blessing be upon our Master Muḥammad,
his Family and Companions.

APPENDIX ONE

Patience and Victory

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "and that victory comes with patience." This statement is in full accord with the sayings of Allāh, Most High,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً
فَٱثْبُتُوا۟ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

"You who have faith! When you meet a troop, stand firm and remember Allāh repeatedly so that hopefully you will be successful."[1]

إِن يَكُن مِّنكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَٰبِرُونَ
يَغْلِبُوا۟ مِا۟ئَتَيْنِ ۚ وَإِن يَكُن مِّنكُم مِّا۟ئَةٌ يَغْلِبُوٓا۟ أَلْفًا مِّنَ
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟

"If there are twenty of you who are patient, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a hundred

---

[1] *al-Anfāl* (8): 45

of you, they will overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve."[2]

He said, concerning the story of Ṭālūt,

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُۥ هُوَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ قَالُوا۟
لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا ٱلْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ ۚ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ
يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَـٰقُوا۟ ٱللَّهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ
غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةًۢ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ مَعَ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾

"Then when he and those who had faith with him had crossed it, they said, 'We do not have the strength to face Goliath and his troops today.' But those who were sure that they were going to meet Allāh said, 'How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allāh's permission! Allāh is with the patient.'"[3]

Allāh, Most High, says,

بَلَىٰٓ ۚ إِن تَصْبِرُوا۟ وَتَتَّقُوا۟ وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ
هَـٰذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِخَمْسَةِ ءَالَـٰفٍ مِّنَ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

"Yes indeed! But if you are patient and have *taqwā* and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels clearly identified."[4]

There are many more verses and aḥādīth concerning being pa-

---

[2] *al-Anfāl* (8): 65

[3] *al-Baqarah* (2): 249

[4] *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 125

tient when meeting the enemy.

'Umar asked the elders of Banū 'Abasa, 'What tool do you fight people with?' They replied, 'With patience. We have never fought a people except that we were patient and steadfast like they were patient and steadfast.'

One of the Salaf said, 'All of us dislike death and the pain of injury, however we attain varying degrees through patience.'

Baṭṭāl was asked about courage to which he replied, 'Patience for an hour.'

All this pertains to fighting the external enemy: fighting the disbelievers, but the same applies to fighting the internal enemy: fighting the lower self and base desires. Indeed, fighting these is one of the greatest forms of Jihād. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The Mujāhid is one who strives against his soul for the sake of Allāh."[5]

'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr replied to a person who asked about Jihād by saying, 'Start with your self and strive against it. Start with your self and start a campaign against it!'

It is reported on the authority of Jābir, with a ḍa'īf isnād, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to a people who had returned from battle,

[5] Aḥmad #23951, Tirmidhī #1261 on the authority of Faḍālah.

Aḥmad #23957 with the words, "...upon the obedience of Allāh," with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād. Aḥmad #23965 with the words, "...in the Way of Allāh," with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād. Tirmidhī #1621 with the words, "The Mujāhid is one who strives against his soul," and he said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ.

Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ and it was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #6424, Ḥakim #24, Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #549 and Arna'ūṭ.

"You have returned from the lesser Jihād to the greater Jihād." It was asked, 'What is the greater Jihād?' He replied, "The servant's striving against his base desires."[6]

When Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq appointed 'Umar (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) as *Khalīfah*, he advised him, 'The first thing you have to beware of is your self inside of you.'

It is reported in the ḥadīth of Sa'd ibn Sinān on the authority of Anas (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), and in the mursal ḥadīth of Mālik al-Ashja'ī, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Your enemy is not that person who, if he kills you, guarantees your entry in Paradise, or if you kill him, he will be a light for you. Your worst enemy is your self inside you."[7]

The poet, 'Abbās ibn al-Aḥnaf encapsulated this meaning in a poem,

My heart calls me to what will harm me,
Increasing my sorrow and my pain.
How can I guard against my enemy,

---

[6] Bayhaqī, *al-Zuhd al-Kabīr* #373 and he said that the isnād contains weakness. It was ruled ḍa'īf by ibn Rajab as above and in *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, vol. 1, pg. 489. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, pg. 197 said that it had no basis and in *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Majmū'*, vol. 1, pg. 221 that it is not authentic. Zayla'ī, *Takhrīj al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, pg. 395 said that it was gharīb jiddan. Ibn Ḥajr, *al-Kāfī*, pg. 194 said, 'It contains 'Īsā ibn Ibrāhīm from Yaḥyā ibn Ya'lā from Layth ibn Abū Sulaym all of whom are ḍa'īf.' Albānī, *al-Ḍa'īfah* #2460 ruled it munkar.
'Alī al-Qārī, *al-Asrār al-Marfū'ah* #211 quoted ibn Hajr stating that it is a saying of Ibrāhīm ibn Abū 'Ablah and the author, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, vol. 1, pg. 489 also quotes it as his saying.

[7] Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #3445 from Abū Mālik al-Ash'arī and it was ruled ḍa'īf by Albānī, *Ḍa'īf al-Targhīb* #1890

When the enemy resides inside me?

This Jihād also requires patience, whoever steadfastly strives against his self, his desires and his shayṭān will achieve victory. Whoever, on the other hand, despairs and gives up patience will be overcome, defeated and imprisoned. He will become subjugated and mean, imprisoned by his shayṭān and his desires. It is said,

If a person does not defeat his desires
They will render the noble, ignoble

Another said,

Perhaps a stranger is imprisoned by passion,
Yet in the face of patience it dissipates.
A person beset with lusts is a slave,
But if he subdues them, he is a king!

Ibn al-Mubārak said, 'Whoever is patient will end up finding little requiring patience. Whoever despairs will find little to take pleasure in.'

Bukhārī and Muslim record that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The strong person is not a person who wrestles, but the strong person is that person who can control his self when angry."[8]

A person described Aḥnaf ibn Qays with the words, 'He had a complete mastery over his self when angry.' A person remarked to one of them, 'So-and-so can walk on water.' He replied, 'If Allāh grants a person the ability to oppose his desires, such a one is stronger than the person who can walk on water.'

[8] Bukhārī #6114, Muslim #2608 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

Know that your self is like an animal, if it knows that you are firm and resolute, it will not waver, but if it knows that you are lazy and irresolute, it will take advantage and hanker after its wants and pursue its lusts.

Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī would say, 'While in Iraq, I was in charge of [up keeping] the palaces, the vessels, clothes and food of the princes and my soul did not want any of them. Then I was put in charge of dates and my soul almost fell upon them.' This was mentioned to one of the Gnostics who said, 'He had no hope of attaining the first so his lusts did not hanker after them, but he did want the second, so they did hanker after them.'

> Steadfastly I avoided delights
> till they vanished.
> I forced my soul to forego them,
> They remained absent.
> The soul goes where
> A person directs.
> If it sees an opportunity,
> It hankers after it, otherwise not,
> For many a day my self
> Gained ascendancy.
> Yet when it saw my resolve
> At humility, it submitted.

Therefore, his saying, *"and that victory comes with patience,"* subsumes patience and steadfastness in striving against both the external and internal enemy. The Salaf would view this latter patience: patiently striving against the self and desires to be better than patience in the face of tribulation.

Maymūn ibn Mihrān said, 'Patience is of two categories: pa-

tience when encountering calamity which is good, and patience in avoiding sins which is better.' Saʿīd ibn Jubayr said, 'Patience is of two types: the best form is patience in avoiding what Allāh has proscribed and doing those acts of worship that He has made obligatory, and patience when facing calamity.'

A ḥadīth having this meaning is reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) on the authority of ʿAlī but it is not authentic.[9]

[9] Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ṣabr* #24 with the words, "Patience is of three types: patience when encountering calamity, patience in obedience, and patience in avoiding sin..."

APPENDIX TWO

Relief Accompanies Distress

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "and that relief comes with distress." This is proven by the sayings of Allāh, Most High,

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُنَزِّلُ ٱلْغَيْثَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا۟ وَيَنشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُۥ ۚ
وَهُوَ ٱلْوَلِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾

"It is He who sends down abundant rain, after they have lost all hope, and unfolds His mercy. He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy."[1]

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى يُرْسِلُ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُۥ
فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُۥ كِسَفًا فَتَرَى ٱلْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ
خِلَٰلِهِۦ ۖ فَإِذَآ أَصَابَ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦٓ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِن كَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِم مِّن قَبْلِهِۦ لَمُبْلِسِينَ

"It is Allāh who sends the winds which stir up clouds which He spreads about the sky however He wills. He forms them into dark clumps and you see the rain

[1] *al-Shūrā* (42): 28

> come pouring out from the middle of them. When He makes it fall on those of His servants He wills, they rejoice, even though before He sent it down on them they were in despair."[2]

In a ḥadīth reported by Abū Razīn al-ʿUqaylī, the Prophet (ﷺ), "Our Lord laughs at the despair of His servant when His altering of his circumstances is imminent."[3] This was recorded by Imām Aḥmad. His son, ʿAbdullāh, also records a lengthy ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Razīn that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "On the day that (He will) send rain, Allāh knows that He will see you in a state of despair and He will laugh knowing that the change He will bring about is imminent."[4]

The meaning is that Allāh, Glorious is He, is amazed at the despondency of His servants, their fear, their misgivings and their giving up hope of His mercy when He has decreed that their circumstances are soon to change, while they remain unaware, and rain is to fall.

While the Prophet (ﷺ) was standing, delivering the Friday sermon, a man came to him complaining of drought and the strait-

---

[2] *al-Rūm* (30): 48-49

[3] Aḥmad #16187-16201, ibn Mājah #181, ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad, *al-Sunnah* #452-453
Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Wāsiṭiyyah*, said that the ḥadīth was ḥasan. Suyūṭi, *al-Jāmiʿ* #5207 said it was ṣaḥīḥ. Arnaʿūṭ said that the isnād was ḍaʿīf as did Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #2810 but he ruled the ḥadīth ḥasan due to supporting witnesses.

[4] Aḥmad #16206, ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad, *al-Sunnah* #452-453, Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*, vol. 19, pg. 211 #477
The isnād is ḍaʿīf. cf. Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #2810 and Arnaʿūṭ.

ened circumstances everyone was in. The Prophet (ﷺ) raised his hands and supplicated for rain whereupon rain clouds gathered and it rained continuously till the following Friday when they asked him (ﷺ) to supplicate for the rain to stop. He did so and the skies cleared.[5]

In His Book, Allāh has narrated numerous stories that deal with relief coming after distress and hardship. He told us of His rescuing Nuḥ and those with him on the ark from the *"terrible plight"*[6] wherein the earth's population were all drowned. He informed us of His saving Ibrāhīm (*'alayhis-salām*) from the fire kindled by the polytheists and how He made it *"coolness and peace"*[7] for him. He also narrated to us how He ordered Ibrāhīm to slaughter his son and, at the last moment, how He ransomed him with a *"mighty sacrifice."*[8] He told us of the story of Mūsā and how his mother placed him in the river and his subsequently being found by Pharaoh's family. He informed us of the story of Mūsā and Pharaoh: how He saved Mūsā and drowned his enemy. He narrated the story of Ayyūb, Yūnus, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf and the story of Yūnus's people when they believed. He also told us about numerous incidents in the life of Muḥammad (ﷺ) where He came to his aid and saved him such as when he was in the cave, at the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Uḥud and the Battle of Ḥunayn.

He told us the story of 'Ā'ishah when she was falsely accused

---

[5] Bukhārī #932-933-1013-1019-1021-1029-1033-3582-6093-6342, Muslim #897 on the authority of Anas.

[6] *al-Anbiyā'* (21): 76

[7] *al-Anbiyā'* (21): 69

[8] *al-Ṣāffāt* (37): 107

and how He absolved her of that accusation.[9] He narrated to us the story of the three

وَعَلَى ٱلثَّلَٰثَةِ ٱلَّذِينَ خُلِّفُوا۟ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوٓا۟ أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّآ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوٓا۟

> "who were left behind, so that when the earth became narrow for them, for all its great breadth, and their own selves became constricted for them and they realised that there was no refuge from Allāh except in Him, He turned to them so that they might turn to Him."[10]

The Sunnah mentions many such incidents such as the story of the three who were trapped in the cave by a falling boulder and they supplicated to Allāh, making mention of their righteous deeds, and He relieved them.[11] And such as the story of Ibrāhīm and Sārah with the tyrant who coveted her for his own ends and how Allāh defeated the evil plot.[12]

Such events occurring to Muslims and those before Islām are

[9] The full story is recorded by Bukhārī #2661-4141-4690-4750-4757-6679-7369-7370-7500-7545 and Muslim #2770 on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[10] *al-Tawbah* (9): 118
The full story is recorded by Bukhārī #2757-2947-2950-3088-3556-3889-3951-4417-4673-4676-4677-4678-6255-6690-7225 and Muslim #2769 on the authority of Ka'b ibn Mālik.

[11] Bukhārī #2215-2272-2333-3465-5974 and Muslim #2743 on the authority of ibn 'Umar

[12] Bukhārī #2217-2635-3357-3358-5084-6950 and Muslim #2371 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

too many to mention, many of them are collated in books such as ibn Abī al-Dunyā's *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah* and *Mujābī al-Du'ā* and in the book *al-Mustaghīthīn bi'llāh wa'l-Mustaṣrikhīna bihi*, and the books dealing with the miracles of the *Awliyā'*, the biographies of the righteous and the works of history.

One of the scholars - I think he was from Morocco - mentioned in a book of his that he heard Abū Dharr al-Harawī, the Ḥāfiẓ, narrate that, while he was in Baghdād reading to Abū Ḥafṣ ibn Shāhīn in a perfume sellers shop, he saw a man coming to the perfume seller and giving him ten dirhams in return for whatever he needed, he placed the items in a bowl and put the bowl on his head. He slipped and his bowl fell, breaking all the items and he began to cry profusely saying, 'In a caravan I lost a camel carrying four hundred - or he said four thousand - dīnārs and with them stones for rings which were worth even more. However, I do not despair at their loss but I have just had a son born to me and we need the items that a woman needs after having given birth and all I had were these ten dirhams! Then, when what was decreed just happened, I fell into despair. I have nothing to give them tonight and no work tomorrow that I may bring something home, the only thing I can think of is to run away and let them die in peace.' Abū Dharr said, 'An elder from al-Jund, sitting at the threshold of his house, heard the story and he sought Abū Ḥafṣ's permission to enter his house along with his colleagues while the afflicted person was yet with him. He granted them permission and the elder asked the man to repeat his story and asked him who was in the caravan he spoke of and where he lost the camel. He told him and was asked, "If you saw it, would you recognise it?" He replied, "Yes." The man brought out the camel and when he saw it he said, "That's it," and he described the stones it carried. When its baggage was opened, they saw those stones in it, so the elder

returned it to him and he became wealthy once again. When the man had left, the Jundi man wept and when asked why, he said, "The only wish I had left in this world was that Allāh bring the owner of this wealth to me to retrieve it. Now that Allāh has fulfilled that wish by His grace, I have no further wish left to meet and so I know that the time of death is near."' Abū Dharr said, 'He passed away less than a month later and we prayed over him, may Allāh have mercy on him.'

The same author narrated from someone in Mawsul that there was a trader there who would travel to different lands to ply his trade. One time he travelled to Kūfah with all of his trade goods and everything he owned. During this journey he met a person who served him well, they became fast friends and he came to trust him completely. Then, while they had stopped at a rest station, he took advantage of him and stole all his property and provisions, leaving him with nothing. He searched and searched but was unable to find out where the servant had gone so, on foot and starving, he returned to his land. He entered his city by night and knocked on his door. When his family learned it was him, they rejoiced and praised Allāh for his return saying, 'Your wife has just given birth to a son and we have no money to buy the things a woman needs post-delivery. Tonight, we are very hungry so buy some flour and oil for the lamps.' When he heard this, his misery and distress increased. Unwilling to tell them what had happened, he left to a nearby shop and extended the salām to the shopkeeper and gathered the oil and everything else he needed. Then, while talking to him, he saw his saddlebag lying unguarded on the ground in the shop and asked how it got there. The shopkeeper said, 'A man bought food from me and asked me to host him. I put his saddle-bag in my shop and tied his beast in my neighbour's house. The man is sleeping in the Masjid.' Taking the saddle-bag with him,

he went to the Masjid to find the man sleeping. He kicked him and he awoke alarmed. 'Thief! Betrayer! Where is my wealth?' he cried. He replied, 'It is in the bag around your neck,' and when he looked he found that nothing was missing at all. He then retrieved his beast, spent lavishly on his family and then told them all that had happened.

A similar story is related by Tinnawkhī, *al-Faraj baʿd al-Shiddah*. It is lengthy, but in summary: At the time of al-Rashīd there lived a money-exchanger who bought a slave-girl for five hundred dīnārs. He fell deeply in love her, and in wanting to be with her all the time, his business suffered immensely. He spent all his capital and was left with nothing. The slave-girl became pregnant and he began to take his house apart and sell the effects therein until nothing remained, then, while in this state, she went into labour and asked him to buy what she needed for birth and post-birth complaining that she would die if he did not hurry. Weeping, he immediately left the house having resolved to drown himself in the Tigris. He was about to jump in, when the fear of Allāh struck him and stopped him; instead he travelled on foot from city to city until he reached Khurasān where he stopped and commenced employment. He wrote sixty six letters to his home town asking after the slave-girl but got no response and determined that she had indeed passed away. Many years later he decided to return to Baghdād and took with him his property to the value of twenty thousand ḍīnārs. The caravan was attacked by highway robbers and they stole everything leaving him, once again, poor and needy. He continued on his journey until he reached Baghdād, entering it in the same state that he had left it some thirty years ago. He went to his house to find it well looked after with a beautiful entrance, there were doorkeepers, servants and mules. He asked who lived in the house and he was told that it belonged to such-a-such money-changer,

the name they gave was his name and they said that the mother was foster mother to the Leader of the Believer's son and that the owner of the house himself was in charge of the Bayt al-Māl. The person he had asked told him that his father had told him that the father of this money-changer also used to be a successful money-changer who, being beset with poverty, left seeking items for the mother when she was in labour and had lost his way and died. His mother had begged help from some neighbours who came to her assistance. Then, the Leader of the Believers had a son born to him, Ma'mūn, and he would accept the milk of no foster mother save hers; so, while in his service, she came to hold a position of respect and honour in his household. 'Then, when Ma'mūn became Khalīfah, he kept the woman and her son with him and her son built this house you see,' he finished. The man asked if the mother was still alive and he replied, 'Yes, she spends some days with the Khalīfah and some days with her son.' The money-changer, the son, arrived with a group of people and entered his house; the man went in as well. The son fulfilled their needs and they left, leaving the man alone. The youth asked, 'Old man, what is it you need?' He replied, 'I am your father.' His face went white and he quickly jumped up and led the man into his house, sitting him on a chair. There was a screened area in the room and the old man remarked. 'Perhaps you should ask so-and-so if I am telling the truth,' mentioning his mothers name. The mother, the slave-girl, heard his voice and raised the screens and rushed to her master, kissing him and weeping. He informed them of his story and they took him to al-Ma'mūn who had him take his son's position and promoted the son.

Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah*, records with his isnād to Waḍḍāḥ ibn Khaythama who said, "Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz, may Allāh have mercy on him, ordered me to release all the prisoners

in a prison, so I released them all save Yazīd ibn Abī Muslim who vowed to have my blood in revenge. I was in Africa when I was told that Yazīd ibn Abī Muslim, recently appointed Amīr of the African provinces, had arrived. I fled. He sent people after me who caught me and took me to him. He said, "By Allāh, I have been asking Him repeatedly to allow me to find a way to you!" He said, "By Allāh, I have been asking Him repeatedly to save me from your evil!" He said, "By Allāh, He has not granted you safety and I will kill you! Were the Angel of Death itself to race me in taking away your soul, I would beat it! Bring a sword and the executioners mat!" I was made to kneel on it and shackled, the executioner stood over me, sword ready. Then the call to prayer was given and he went to pray, when he went into prostration, an army attacked him, killing him. A man came and cut me free and told me to go on my way.'

He also records, with his isnād to 'Umar al-Sarāyā who was, one time, fighting in the Roman provinces by himself. Once, while sleeping, one of them came to him and prodded him with his foot, awaking him. 'O Arab,' he said, 'you have a choice: I can kill you with a spear, a sword or we can wrestle!' He said, 'Then, let us wrestle.' He beat me and, sitting on my chest, asked, 'How should I kill you?' I cried out, 'I bear witness that everything that is worshipped beneath your Throne is false save Your noble face. You see my circumstances so save me!' I then fell in a swoon and when I came to, I found the Roman lying dead besides me.

Abū'l-Ḥasan ibn al-Jahḍam records with his isnād to Ḥātim al-Aṣamm who said, 'We encountered the Turks and had a jousting match. A Turk threw me off my horse and then dismounted and sat on my chest. Grabbing my beard, he took a knife out of his sock and moved to slaughter me. My heart, however, was not with him

or his knife, it was with my Master. I thought, "My Master, if You have decreed my slaughter here, I fully submit to Your ordinance. I belong to You." While in that situation, one of the Muslims shot him with an arrow and he fell off me. I stood up and, taking his knife from his hand, slaughtered him with it.'

Let your hearts reside with your Master and you will see such wonders of His providence unfurl that were never seen by your predecessors!

There are many more incidents such as these but what we have mentioned thus far is enough.

APPENDI X THREE

Ease Accompanies Hardship

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "and that with hardship comes ease." This statement is taken from His, Glorious is He, sayings,

سَيَجْعَلُ ٱللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

"Allāh will appoint after difficulty, ease."[1]

فَإِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

"For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease."[2]

Ḥumayd ibn Ḥammād ibn Abū al-Khuwār narrated that 'Ā'idh ibn Shuraiḥ narrated to him that he heard Anas ibn Mālik saying, 'The Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting in front of a hole in the ground and remarked, "If hardship were to enter this burrow, ease would fol-

[1] *al-Ṭalāq* (65): 7

[2] *al-Sharḥ* (94): 5-6

low it in and remove it." Then Allāh revealed,

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٥ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٦

> "For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease."[3]

This was recorded by ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Tafsīr* and it was recorded by Bazzār with the wording, "Were hardship to come and enter this burrow, ease would follow it in and remove it. Then He recited, *"For truly with hardship comes ease."*

They have ruled Ḥumayd ibn Ḥammād ḍa'īf.[4] Ibn Jarīr records on the authority of Ma'mar from al-Ḥasan who said, 'The Prophet (ﷺ) came out one day, joyous and happy, saying, "One hardship will never overcome two eases."'[5]

---

[3] *al-Sharḥ* (94): 5-6

[4] Ibn Abī Ḥātim #19395, Bazzār #2288, Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* #3416
It was also recorded by Ḥākim #3010 and Dhahabī said, 'It was singularly narrated by Ḥumayd ibn Ḥammād on the authority of 'Ā'idh and both are munkar in their narration of ḥadīth.' Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #10012 said that it was ḍa'īf and Albānī, *al-Ḍa'īfah* #1403 said that it was ḍa'īf jiddan.

[5] Ṭabarī, Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #10013, Ḥākim #3950 and Dhahabī said it was mursal as did Zayla'ī, *Takhrīj al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, pg. 235. Ibn Ḥajr, *al-Kāfī*, pg. 319 said that it was mursal and that the mawṣūl version was ḍa'īf, in *Taghlīq al-Ta'līq*, vol. 4, pg. 372 he adds that the isnād to al-Ḥasan is ṣaḥīḥ. Albānī, *al-Ḍa'īfah* #4342 said that it was ḍa'īf.
Ibn Abī Ḥātim #19396 records it as a saying of al-Ḥasan.
Ibn Kathīr said, 'The meaning of these words is that in both occurrences, the word *difficulty* is appended to the definite article, *al*, as such it is singular. The word *ease* is left indefinite; as such there is more than one occurrence of it. Therefore the second reference to *difficulty* denotes the same as in the first reference, whereas there is more than one instance of *ease*.'

فَإِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

> "For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease."[6]

He also records this via the route of 'Awf and Yūnus from al-Ḥasan as a mursal ḥadīth. He also records it as a ḥadīth of Qatādah who said, 'It has been mentioned to us that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) gave his Companions the glad-tidings of this verse saying, "One hardship will never overcome two eases."'[7]

Ibn Abī al-Dunyā records the ḥadīth of Mu'āwiyah ibn Qurrah on the authority of someone who narrated to him that ibn Mas'ūd said, 'Were hardship to enter a burrow, ease would follow it in.'[8] Then he recited,

فَإِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ ٱلْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾

> "For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease."[9]

He also records the ḥadīth of 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam from his father from his grandfather that when Abū 'Ubaydah was besieged, 'Umar wrote to him saying, 'No matter what hardship a person faces, Allāh will send relief afterwards for

---

[6] *al-Sharḥ* (94): 5-6

[7] Ṭabarī and it is mursal. Ibn Ḥajr, *Taghlīq al-Ta'līq*, vol. 4, pg. 372 said that the isnād was ṣaḥīḥ up to Qatādah.

[8] Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #10011. Suyūṭī, *al-Durr* references it ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Sabr* Ibn Ḥajr, *Taghlīq al-Ta'līq*, vol. 4, pg. 372 said that the isnād was jayyid.

[9] *al-Sharḥ* (94): 5-6

one hardship cannot overcome two eases and He says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱصْبِرُوا۟
وَصَابِرُوا۟ وَرَابِطُوا۟ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

"You who have faith! Be patient; be supreme in patience; be firm on the battlefield; and have *taqwā* of Allāh so that hopefully you will be successful."[10, 11]

This was also how ibn 'Abbās[12] and other exegetes explained this verse saying, 'One hardship will never overcome two eases.'

While one of the early people was in the open desert in a state of extreme grief, a line of poetry came to him,

When a man awakes aggrieved,
I think death is better for him.

When night came, he heard a voice call out,

Be assured O person
Beset with worry!
Poetry has he recited,
Still uppermost in his mind:
When hardship intensifies,

[10] *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 200

[11] Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah*, pg. 24, Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab* #10010, ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 5, pg. 335, vol. 13, pg. 37

Ḥākim #3176 said it was ṣaḥīḥ, meeting the criteria of Muslim, and Dhahabī agreed; however ibn Ḥajr, *Taghlīq al-Ta'līq*, vol. 4, pg. 372 said that the isnād was ḥasan.

[12] Sakhāwī, *al-Maqāṣid* #877 said, 'It was mentioned by al-Farrā' from al-Kalbī from Abū Ṣāliḥ.'

Ponder, "*Did We not expand...*"[13]
A hardship lies between two eases
When you recognise that, rejoice!

He said, 'I memorised these verses and Allāh relieved me of my distress.'

Many poems are written this vein; we shall select a few to quote here:

Be patient, patience yields wonders.
Despair not at calamity,
Ease closely follows adversity.
At hard times, adversity is removed.

One of them said:

Many are those who despair at events
The relief from which is imminent.

Another said,

Perhaps relief is soon to follow,
We treat our souls with 'perhaps'.
Closest is a person to relief
When he surrenders to despair.

Another recited,

When affairs become hard, expect relief
Relief is imminent when adversity intensifies.

Another composed the following lines,

[13] *al-Sharḥ* (94): 1

Despair not if you are aggrieved for a day,
You have been living in ease for many a day.
Do not think lowly of your Lord,
Beauty is most befitting for Him.
Do not relinquish hope; that is disbelief!
Allāh will make you suffice with little.
Know this: ease follows hardship,
Allāh is the most truthful of all who speak.

One of them said,

Patience is the key to relief's door.
Ease follows every hardship.
Time does not stagnate:
One event follows another.

We will conclude this treatise by mentioning some of the subtleties, benefits and wisdoms of tribulation:

1. The expiation of sins and being rewarded for bearing tribulation with patience. The scholars have differed if a person will be rewarded for the actual tribulation itself.

2. The servant is reminded of his sins so that he can repent and turn back to Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent.

3. The heart becomes soft after having been coarse and hard. One of the Salaf said, 'A person could fall ill and as a result bring his sins to mind. Then, by virtue of his fear of Allāh, they would break up and disperse like flies and Allāh would forgive him.'

4. A person humbling himself and submitting himself before Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent. Indeed such a state is more beloved to Allāh than many deeds of obedience.

5. They lead a person's heart to return to Allāh, to stand at His door, implore Him and to be submissive before Him. This is one of the greatest benefits of tribulation. Allāh has censured those who are not submissive to Him at times of hardship,

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَٰهُم بِٱلْعَذَابِ فَمَا ٱسْتَكَانُوا۟ لِرَبِّهِمْ
وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

"We seized them with the punishment, but they did not go low before their Lord; nor will they humble themselves."[14]

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ
إِلَىٰٓ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَٰهُم بِٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

"We sent Messengers to nations before you and afflicted their nations with hardship and distress so that hopefully they would humble themselves."[15]

One of the previous Scriptures states, 'Allāh puts a servant to trial because He loves to hear his humble entreaty.' Sa'īd ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz said, 'Dāwūd (*'alayhis-salām*) said, "Glory be to the One who causes a person to supplicate when faced with tribulation. Glory be to the One who confers gratitude to a person in a state of ease."'

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī passed by Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir who was in state of intense grief. He asked after him and he was told that he was burdened by debt. Abū Ja'far said, 'Has the door of supplication opened for him?' They said, 'Yes.'

---

[14] *al-Mu'minūn* (23): 76

[15] *al-An'ām* (6): 43

He said, 'A servant is truly blessed if, when in need, he frequently invokes his Lord, no matter what that need.'

Some of them, when supplicating at times of adversity, would not want a quick response for fear that the state (of need of their Lord) that they found themselves in would end. Thābit said, 'When the believer invokes Allāh, Allāh entrusts Jibrīl to fulfil his need saying, "Do not hasten in meeting his need for I love to hear the voice of My believing servant."' This is reported as a ḥadīth of the Prophet (ﷺ) but all its routes are ḍaʿīf.[16]

One of the Salaf saw the Lord of Might in a dream and said, 'My Lord, I have invoked You so much but without response!' He replied, 'I love to hear your voice.'

6. Tribulation leads the heart to relish the delight of patience and to be content. This is a station of immense rank and importance; the excellence of which we have already alluded to.

7. Tribulation leads to a servant giving up dependency on the creation and leads him to turn to the Creator alone. Allāh has told us that the polytheist turns to Allāh sincerely when supplicating to Him at times of need, what then of the believer?!

8. Tribulation leads a person to actualise and live *Tawḥīḍ* in his heart and this is the most sublime of stations and noblest of rankings. One of the Judeao-Christian narrations mentions, 'Tribulations brings you and Me together. Well-being brings you and your self together.'

---

[16] Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* #8442 on the authority of Jābir.
Haythamī, vol. 10, pg. 151 said, 'Its isnād contains Isḥāq ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Abū Farwa who is matrūk.'

APPENDI X FOUR

The Benefits of Tribulation by al-'Izz Ibn 'Abdu'l-Salām

In tribulations, trials, misfortunes and calamities lie a number of benefits; these benefits have differing degrees of relevance, differing in accordance to the various ranks of people.

- Realising the greatness of Allāh's Lordship and His all-encompassing power.

- Realising the humility and dejection of servitude.

- Actualising sincerity for Allāh, Most High. This is because there is no way to repress hardship except by recoursing to Him and there is no one that one can depend on to remove it except Him.

- Turning in penitence to Allāh, Most High, and directing ones heart to Him.

- Submissiveness and supplication.

- Forbearance.[1] The ranking of forbearance differs in accordance to the magnitude of calamity; showing forbearance at the onset of the severest calamities is from its greatest manifestations.

- Patience and steadfastness in the face of affliction, this leads to Allāh's love and increase in His rewards.

- Experiencing joy at the onset of calamity because of the many benefits it contains.

- Being grateful at the onset of calamity because of the many benefits it contains. Comparable to this is the case of a sick person thanking a doctor who has just amputated one of his limbs in order to save his life, even though this would serve to disable him to some extent.

- Its expiating sins and errors.

- Showing mercy to those who are undergoing affliction and coming to their aid.

- Understanding the greatness of the blessing of ease and well-being. This is because blessings are never truly appreciated until one loses them.

- Understanding what Allāh, Most High, has caused to be the

[1] *Ḥilm*: the abandonment of haste. Rāghib, *al-Mufradāt* said, 'It is the ability to control the soul and temperament at the onrush of anger.' Jāhiẓ, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* said, 'It is the abandonment of taking revenge in the state of extreme anger, despite the ability to do so.' Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rīfāt* said, 'It is to be calm in the state of anger.'

outcome of these benefits in terms of reward in the Hereafter.

- Realising the many hidden benefits it contains. When the tyrannical ruler took Sārah from Ibrāhīm, one of the hidden benefits of this trial was that later she was given Hājar as a servant who bore Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, from whose progeny was born the Master of the Messengers and the Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ). Look and see how great the hidden benefit was in that trial!

- Tribulation and hardship prevents one from evil, vanity, boastfulness, arrogance, ostentation and oppression. It is because of these great benefits that those who were tried most severely were the Prophets, then the righteous and then those closest to them.[2] They were accused of being mad, magicians, fortune tellers; they were mocked and ridiculed. The Companions were evicted from their homes and lands, forced to flee leaving their possessions behind them, their tribulations went from severity to severity, their enemies multiplied in number, on occasion they were overcome and defeated, many of them were killed at Uḥud and other places and battles, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) received injury in his face, one of his molar teeth was broken and his helmet was crushed into the sides of his head and split to expose his head; his enemies rejoiced and his associates despaired. They would live in a constant state of fear, destitution and poverty. They would be forced to tie rocks to their stomachs out of severe hunger[3] and the Master

---

[2] Aḥmad #1481-1494-1555-1607, Tirmidhī #2400, ibn Mājah #4023 on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abū Waqqāṣ.

Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ, Ḥākim #120 said it was ṣaḥīḥ and Dhahabi agreed.

[3] Bukhārī #6452 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

of the first and last never ate his fill of bread twice in any one day.[4] He was injured in various ways to the point that they accused the chastity of his most beloved wife. The Prophets and righteous have always faced trials and tribulations, with each person being tried in proportion to his religion. Some of them would be sawn in half but this would not make them renegade from their faith. The state of hardship and tribulation causes the servant to turn towards Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent.[5] The state of ease, well-being and blessings causes the servant to turn away from Allāh. This is why they ate scarcely and wore modest clothing etc. so that they could be in a state that would lead them to turn back to Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, and devote themselves to Him.

- Being pleased and content with the tribulation such that it would lead to the pleasure of Allāh, Most High. This is because both the righteous and sinner is afflicted with trial, hence whoever is malcontent at its onset, for him is displeasure and misery in this life and the Hereafter. Whoever is pleased and content with it, for him lies in store the good pleasure of Allāh and that is greater than Paradise and what it contains.[6]

---

[4] Muslim #2970 on the authority of 'Ā'ishah.

[5] Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, vol.1, pg. 245 said, 'Ghazālī said, "If you see Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, holding back this world from you, frequently trying you with adversity and tribulation, know that you hold a great status with Him. Know that He is dealing with you as he does with His *Awliyā'* and chosen elite and is watching over you, have you not heard His saying, *"So wait steadfastly for the judgment of your Lord - you are certainly before Our eyes"* [*al-Ṭūr* (52): 48], so acknowledge this great favour upon you."'

[6] Summarised from his work, *Fawā'id al-Balwā w'al-Miḥan*, the full translation of which has been published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2004, Birmingham, United Kingdom under the title, Trials & Tribulations: Wisdom & Benefits.

APPENDIX FIVE

Seeking Allāh's Help

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "When you seek aid, turn to Allāh." After ordering us to safeguard Allāh and to know Him in times of ease - this being the very essence of worship, he directed us to ask Allāh Alone and to invoke Him: "Du'ā is worship," as is mentioned in the ḥadīth of Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, and after stating this, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited,

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ٱدْعُونِىٓ أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

"Your Lord says, 'Call on Me and I will answer you.'"[1]

This was recorded by the authors of the Four Sunans.[2]

---

[1] *Ghāfir* (40): 60

[2] Abū Dāwūd #1479, Tirmidhī #2969-3247-3372, Nasā'ī, *al-Kubrā* #11464, ibn Mājah #3828

Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ. Nawawī, *al-Adhkār*, pg. 478 said its isnād was ṣaḥīḥ, ibn Ḥajr, *Fatḥ*, vol. 1, pg. 64 said that its isnād was jayyid, ibn Ḥibbān #2396 ruled it ṣaḥīḥ as did Ḥākim #1902 with Dhahabī agreeing. Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* #1627 said it was ṣaḥīḥ.

After all this, he directed us to seek the aid of Allāh Alone, and this is derived from His saying,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝٥

"You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help."[3]

This verse lays out a comprehensive principle and it is said that the essential message of all revealed scripture revolves around it.

There are two benefits in seeking the aid of Allāh Alone:

1) The servant does not have the strength to perform actions of obedience without Allāh's help.

2) There is none who can aid him in the betterment of his worldly and religious life except for Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent. Whoever Allāh helps is truly aided and whoever Allāh forsakes is truly forsaken.

The authentic ḥadīth mentions that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Be desirous of all that would benefit you and seek Allāh's aid and do not despair."[4]

He (ﷺ) would say in his sermons, and teach his Companions to say, "All praise is due to Allāh, we ask for His aid and seek His guidance...."[5]

---

[3] *al-Fātiḥah* (1): 5

[4] Muslim #2664 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

[5] Shāfi'ī, *Musnad*, vol. 1, pg. 147 on the authority of ibn 'Abbās with a ḍa'īf jiddan isnād.

The sermon, without the words, "seek His guidance," is recorded by Muslim.

He ordered Muʿādh to never leave saying, "O Allāh! Aid me in remembering You, being grateful to You and making good my worship of You" at the end of every prayer.[6]

One of his (ﷺ) supplications was, "My Lord! Aid me and do not aid others against me!"[7]

The supplication of Qunūt which was employed by ʿUmar and others mentioned, "O Allāh! We seek Your aid!"[8]

A famous narration mentions that, after striking the sea to make it split, Mūsā (*ʿalayhis-salām*) said, 'O Allāh! To You belongs all praise, to You does one complain, You are the One whose aid is sought, and to You does one turn for relief, in You does one place his trust, and there is no might or motion except with You.'[9]

The servant is in need of seeking Allāh's aid in performing the prescribed and abandoning the proscribed, and in bearing the

---

[6] Aḥmad #22119-22126, Abū Dāwūd #1522, Nasāʾī #1304 and *ʿAmal al-Yawm wa'l-Laylah* #109
Nawawī, *al-Adhkār*, pg. 103, *al-Khulāṣah*, vol. 1, pg. 468, *Riyāḍ* #389-1430 said that the isnād was ṣaḥīḥ, as did ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, vol. 7, pg. 97. Ibn ʿAllān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Rabbāniyyah*, vol. 3, pg. 55 quotes ibn Ḥajr saying it was ṣaḥīḥ. Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* #1596 said it was ṣaḥīḥ as did Arnaʿūṭ.

[7] Aḥmad #1997, Abū Dāwūd #1510-1511, Tirmidhī #3551
Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ. It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #948 and Ḥākim #1910 with Dhahabī agreeing. Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī* ruled it ṣaḥīḥ and Arnaʿūṭ said the isnād was ṣaḥīḥ.

[8] Ṭaḥāwī, *Maʿānī al-Āthār*, vol. 1, pg. 250 with a jayyid isnād.

[9] Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*, *al-Ṣaghīr* on the authority of ibn Masʿūd.
Haythamī, vol. 10, pg. 183 said, 'Its isnād contains narrators I do not know.'

vicissitudes of decree with patience. Ya'qūb (*'alayhis-salām*) said,

فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

"...but beauty lies in showing patience and it is Allāh alone who is my Help in the face of what you describe."[10]

It is for this reason that 'Ā'ishah said this same statement in the incident of the Lie and Allāh cleared her of the false accusation.

Mūsā said to his people,

ٱسْتَعِينُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱصْبِرُوٓا۟ ۖ

"So seek help in Allāh and be patient."[11]

Allāh said to his Prophet (ﷺ),

قَٰلَ رَبِّ ٱحْكُم بِٱلْحَقِّ ۗ وَرَبُّنَا ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ٱلْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

"Say: 'Lord, judge with truth! Our Lord is the All-Merciful and the One whose help is sought in the face of what you describe!'"[12]

When the Prophet (ﷺ) gave 'Uthmān the good news that he would enter Paradise after going through tribulation, he said,

[10] *Yūsuf* (12): 18

[11] *al-A'rāf* (7): 128

[12] *al-Anbiyā'* (21): 112

"Allāh's aid is sought!"[13] When they entered on 'Uthmān and beat him, with blood pouring down his body, he was saying, '*None has the right to be worshipped save You, Glory be to You, I have been one of the wrong-doers.* O Allāh! I take refuge with You against them, I seek Your aid in all my affairs, and I ask You for the patience to bear what You have tested me with!'

It is reported on the authority of Abū Ṭalḥah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said in one of his battles when encountering the enemy, "O Master of the Day of Judgment, it is You we worship and Your aid we seek!" Abū Ṭalḥah said, 'I saw the men falling down in fits!'[14] This was recorded by Abū'l-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī.

The servant is in need of seeking Allāh's aid in acquiring good in his religious and worldly life as Zubayr said in his final advice to his son, 'Abdullāh, asking him to pay off his debts, 'If you are unable, seek the help of my Master.' He asked, 'Father, who is your master?' He replied, 'Allāh.' He said, 'Whenever I found it difficult to pay off his debts, I said, "Master of Zubayr, pay off his debt!" and it would be paid off.'

In the first sermon that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) delivered off the pulpit he said, 'The Arabs are like a long suffering camel[15] whose muzzle I have taken hold of, I will take it across the great plain and I seek the aid of Allāh in doing so.'

---

[13] Muslim #2403

[14] Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* #8163 and ibn al-Sunnī, *'Amal al-Yawm wa'l-Laylah* #334
Haythamī, vol. 5, pg. 328 said that its isnād contained 'Abdu'l-Salām ibn Hāshim who is ḍa'īf. It was ruled ḍa'īf by Albānī, *al-Ḍa'īfah* #5105

[15] i.e. it endures any pain it faces and does what it has to do.

The servant will also need Allāh's help to get him through the terrors of the Day of Rising: from the point of his death onwards.

When Khālid ibn al-Walīd was on his death bed, one of the men around him said, 'It is something terribly hard,' i.e. death. Khalid said, 'Certainly! But I seek the aid of Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent.'

When 'Āmir ibn 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr was on his death bed, he cried and said, 'I am only crying at (losing) the heat of the day and the coolness of the standing,' i.e. fasting during the day and praying by night. He said, 'I seek Allāh's aid in bearing this fatal injury of mine.'

One of the early people said, 'My Lord! I am amazed at how someone who knows You could hope in another! I am amazed at how someone who knows You could seek help from another.'

al-Ḥasan wrote to 'Umar ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz, may Allāh have mercy on him, 'Do not seek the aid of any besides Allāh or Allāh may leave you to him.'

One of them said, 'Seek the aid of Allāh, seek His aid for He is the best of those whose aid is sought.'[16]

---

[16] Apendices are taken from the monumental work, *Nūru'l-Iqtibās fī Mishkāt Waṣiyyah al-Nabī li'bn 'Abbās*, which has been published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2009, Birmingham, United Kingdom under the title, The Legacy of the Prophet (ﷺ) - An explanation of his advice to Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) by al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī.